



23rd Year, 3rd Issue
September 2005

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Communicator

Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing



Bobbie Beth's Tidbits...

I cannot imagine that the end of summer is right around the corner. As I try to think where the last few months have gone, I quickly realize they have been spent in exciting states with excited people all talking about new and exciting technology! I have been very busy these summer months attending various conventions all with one common thread, communication access. If you look at communication access for people with varying degrees of hearing loss, we now have Video Relay Services, Video Remote Interpreting, VoIP, the new CapTel phone, portable captioning devices, emergency warning systems, pagers, and now even an Automated Driver's Testing System in American Sign Language!

The world of communication access has increased exponentially within just the last couple of years! At every convention I attended this summer, there were mounds of workshops, discussions, and demonstrations of this new and emerging technology that has given individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing full access to communication. If we look back ten years ago and think

about people's reactions when talking about the possibility of VRS or portable captioning devices, it was as if you were talking to them in a foreign language! There was never the excitement or the assertiveness among people who were deaf or hard of hearing about this type of life changing technology.

Compare ten years ago to today! People who are deaf or hard of hearing have become very savvy users of this technology. It is a rare occasion now a days to see a deaf person without a sidekick pager or a blackberry palm pilot! Almost everyone has a pager or a cell phone so that within an instant people who are deaf or hard of hearing can connect with their friends just as hearing persons do. Communication access is something that will forever be changing as technology changes and I want to encourage all people who are deaf or hard of hearing to try this new technology. Don't be afraid of it, embrace it!

I feel we are on the brink of a technological revolution and I want to make sure that Kentuckians who are deaf or hard of hearing are a part of this revolution! I will do everything I can to ensure that Kentucky is always on the cutting edge of all new technology and gaining the benefits from it! Improved communication access is here now and in our future, here for the taking!

Bobbie Beth

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Alexander Graham Bell
Representative

Betty Timon
American Association of Retired
Persons Representative

Diane Haynes
Service Provider Representative

The deadline to submit information and articles for the December 2005 edition of the Communicator is November 2005. All materials provided through KCDHH are available in accessible format upon request.

Kentucky Storytelling Conference

“The Kentucky Storytelling Association (KSA), in partnership with the Knowledge Center on Deafness (KCD) will host a Storytelling Conference on November 12, 2005 at Greenbo State Resort Park (SRP) in Greenup, Kentucky, from 9:00 am till 9:00 pm. The cost is \$15 in advance and \$20 at the door. Rooms can be reserved at Greenbo SRP at <http://parks.ky.gov/resortparks/go/index.htm>.

This day long conference will allow storytellers of all ages and skill levels to participate if they wish, or to simply listen and learn how to improve their storytelling techniques. KSA is a new organization whose goal is to cross all boundaries to include anyone who loves to tell stories and appreciates the cultural importance of storytelling. KSA and KCD will collaborate on a storytelling conference that is not just accessible, but truly deaf-friendly. A shared love of the art of storytelling brings together storytelling event organizers, deaf and hearing storytellers, and deaf and hearing audiences. American Sign Language interpreters will be provided. Deaf storytellers will participate. If you wish to attend the conference, contact:

Mary Hamilton
mary@maryhamilton.info
or
Row Holloway at KCDHH
row.holloway@kcdhh.ky.gov

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Got CEUs?

Ever found yourself scrambling to obtain those last minute CEU's to maintain your certification? Well, now you have no reason to! KCDHH is in the process of cataloging CD-ROM workshops, called WWWorkshops, from Signs of Development. WWWorkshops offer Professional Development opportunities to meet continuing education needs and career goals and range from topics such as “An Introduction to the Linguistics of ASL” to “Sports and P.E. Signs.”

When fully cataloged, you will be able to borrow these from the Deaf Resource Library and start earning CEUs and/or improving your skills from home. You can do this alone or with a group. Once we have completed cataloging the materials you can view the entire list of workshops on our webpage www.kcdhh.ky.gov. You can browse and choose what you want then let us know. If you are more than 50 miles from Frankfort we will send your selection to you in the mail with a prepaid return postage card. If you are within 50 miles of Frankfort you can come into the office and browse in person.

Keep watching our webpage for more details!!



Do you know...what KCDHH does for you?

KCDHH staff work constantly to improve the educational, economic and cultural quality of life for all deaf and hard of hearing citizens of Kentucky. Recent staff accomplishments include:

- July 30th – 3rd – Attended the Self Help for the Hard of Hearing National Conference in Washington, DC. Vendor showcased new technology to assist the hard of hearing and workshops were beneficial.
- During June, July and August the TDD Program provided 146 individuals with specialized telephone equipment costing \$21,000.
- July 10th – 15th – Attended the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) Conference in San Antonio, TX. Workshop topics included leadership, caucus, deaf and hearing idioms, working with transgender individuals and challenges within Video Relay Interpreting (VRI) services.
- July 20th – Worked with the Governor's Scholars Program to expose students to deaf storytelling at Centre College in Danville.
- July 22nd – Tested Remote Captioning services during the Quarterly Commission Meeting.
- July 31st – Attended the Joint Commission on Infant Hearing (JCIH) in Omaha, NE on behalf of the Council of Education of the Deaf. Obtained information about closing the gaps in educational and health care services for infants and young children with hearing loss.
- August 2nd – 7th – Attended the National Black Deaf Advocates (NBDA) Conference in Orlando, Florida. Leadership and grant writing workshops proved beneficial.
- August 11th – 13th – Attended the Ohio Association of the Deaf Conference in Springfield, OH.
- August 18th – Education Cabinet showcased at the Governor's Office booth at the State Fair.
- August 18th – 28th – Self Help for the Hard of Hearing (SHHH) volunteers manned a booth at the KY State Fair / Main Street, which distributed information on assistive technology, advocacy and other beneficial information. Two staff worked the booth on August 25th.
- August 24th – Met with members of the Kentucky Disabilities Coalition (KDC) and the Kentucky Board of Elections (KBE) to test voting booths and ensure accessibility for individuals with all kinds of disabilities. A communication tips handout was provided to be used by poll workers in the future.



Communication Access...TDD Distribution Program Update

Communication is defined as “the exchange of thoughts, messages, or information as by speech, signals, writing or behavior; or the art and technique of using words effectively to impart information, ideas, attitudes, emotions or behavior, whether verbal or non verbal.”

We all receive and provide information differently;
therefore we all have different communication needs.

In an effort to effectively serve ALL of our constituents who need assistive technology to communicate on the telephone, effective July 1st the TDD Program began distributing 19 different kinds of telephone equipment. Equipment for deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind and speech impaired consumers is now available; including eight different amplified phones (one for visually impaired consumers), four different speech impaired phones (including one for consumers who have had laryngectomy surgery and one voice activated speakerphone), three different voice carry over phones (including CapTel) and five different TDD's (including the Pocket Comm portable TDD/VCO). The program also offers 4 different kinds of signaling devices to meet the needs of all consumers (flasher, loud ringer, tactile and combination flasher/ringer). Recommendations of alternate equipment that should be included in the distribution program are always welcomed. Equipment can be viewed and tested at the KCDHH office, Monday through Friday 8:00 am to 4:30 pm. Please call 1-800-372-2907 to schedule an appointment to view the equipment or obtain an application. You may also access pictures and descriptions of each piece of equipment on the KCDHH website www.kcdhh.org.

Spread the word to anyone who might benefit from better access to *Communication*!

Spotlight on KCDHH Commissioner Nina Coyer: Revolution in Kyrgyzstan

by Tina McFarland Savelyev (writing from her home in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan)

On Thursday, March 24, 2005 a revolution erupted in the capital city of Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. President Askar Akiev, the only president this tiny Central Asian republic has known since the collapse of the Soviet Union 14 years ago, watched as the White House (that's really what it's called here) was stormed and raided by a mob of discontent citizenry. Parliamentary elections and various appointments were announced in February and conspicuous among them were the son and daughter of President Akiev who was due to complete his last eligible term of office in October. As stores throughout the city were looted and burned and furniture was thrown from the windows of the White House, President Akiev and his wife fled to Moscow where Russia's President Vladimir Putin granted them asylum.

On Tuesday, June 7, 2005 another revolution was quietly begun on a dirt road near Karagachovi Roschi (translated from the Russian, it means "Elm Grove") at Special School #21 for Hard-of-Hearing and Late-Deafened Children. Established during Soviet times almost 30 years ago, it has been illegal to use sign language to teach hard-of-hearing children (there is actually a law). All teachers (they are all hearing) have a large cover they hold over their mouths so the children cannot see their lips while they teach, thereby forcing them to learn to hear. That's the idea, anyway. The actual education of the students seems to

have been lost over the years in the effort to make them hearing. These are not few in number: the World Health Organization has estimated that perhaps 10% of the population here is deaf. That's almost half a million individuals.

Coordinated by Hands of Hope, a non-government organization (NGO) working among the deaf in Kyrgyzstan as strong advocates of sign language, a first-ever seminar was brought to this residential school. It was the culmination of over 5 years' labor by Alex and Tina Savelyev who direct Hands of Hope. Nina Coyer, assistant professor at Eastern Kentucky University, (EKU) granted an audience with over 30 teachers of Special School #21 to present modern methods for the education of deaf and hard-of-hearing children. Nina actually traveled to Bishkek last Spring in the hopes of presenting this seminar, but the director of Special School #21 was content simply to get acquainted on a personal level. Only after a dinner meeting at the home of the Savelyevs' home in Bishkek following the Coyers' arrival last month, did the director mention having the teachers' seminar discussed a year ago.

Nina, who is deaf, shared her personal story of the struggles she faced and overcame being educated in a hearing world. Nina presented the seminar using American Sign Language, which was interpreted into spoken English by Tina Savelyev and then into spoken Russian by Elena Tsoy, both

professional interpreters. The "personal sharing" portion of the seminar should have lasted half an hour or so, but the teachers were interested and moved by her willingness to share and their questions went on for almost two hours. Nina's husband, Roger Coyer, also shared his story and answered questions. Also deaf, Roger is retired from teaching and coaching at Kentucky School for the Deaf. Several teachers wept openly as the Coyers' opened their



hearts to them (soul-sharing is a valuable asset in this culture). For the remainder of the day, nearly every teacher sat in rapt attention as Nina shared the idea of using sign language to educate deaf and hard-of-hearing children. She discussed the pathological and cultural views of deafness and suggested that while speech and lip-reading are valuable learned skills, they do not equal language. She also shared documentation from the World Federation of the Deaf and the United Nations, which highlighted the importance of sign language for education of the world's deaf children.

continued on page 5

Revolution in Kyrgyzstan

continued from page 4

At the conclusion of the day's meeting, many of the teachers confessed that these were revolutionary new ideas for them to consider. "This is the first time we've attended a professional seminar where the presenter talked *with* us and not *to* us. This alone is important to us," several commented. One teacher noted on her conference evaluation, "I wish our own methods were helpful to our students here" while another noted, "the first step to the solution of the problems we face has been made, thanks to this seminar." They admitted that the old Soviet system of viewing the deaf as disabled invalids has caused them to believe that the very students they have given their professional careers to educate would never amount to much. They'd certainly never be able to attend university or become teachers themselves . . . simply because they cannot hear. In a very

culturally sensitive way, Nina asked them to consider the investments they are making in the young people they influence each day . . . if the children see that their teachers believe in them, then there's hope that they will begin to believe in themselves. *This* is the revolution that is brewing among the very large deaf population here.

Alexander Savelyev, a Central Asian national, says that the past five years of Deaf Kids Camps and relationship building among a large and growing group of parents, as well as school faculty, has been very effective. "Bringing change to a mindset that took hold generations ago will not happen overnight. Our ongoing work among the people here combined with the efforts of those who are able to come for short-term projects like this seminar are important to the goal of realizing a "Deaf Can" attitude here.

As for Nina Coyer, she looks forward to returning to Bishkek next summer. "I am grateful to

EKU's College of Education for their support in allowing me to participate in this wonderful opportunity," she adds, "and I hope that together we can continue the work of encouraging the teachers in Kyrgyzstan to raise their expectations of their deaf and hard-of-hearing children."

Political protests have continued in Bishkek since the March 24 revolution. The White House was stormed again on Friday, June 17 when a group (apparently paid individuals) expressed their anger that their candidate was not allowed on the election ballot (turns out he was not a citizen of Kyrgyzstan). Hands of Hope has delayed its annual Deaf Kids Camp schedule and will begin on July 11 after the election begins on July 10. So, even while the political revolution rolls onward in the news, the quieter revolution to bring the deaf and hard-of-hearing citizenry to an equal place in society here presses ahead, one hand up at a time.

Main Street Kentucky



With approximately 700,000 visitors annually, the Kentucky State Fair is definitely the place to be if you are trying to educate the general population about programs and services. The Kentucky Self Help for the Hard of Hearing (SHHH) knowing the importance of deaf and hard of hearing issues took advantage of this and had a booth on Main Street Kentucky. The booth had a wide variety of Hearing Assistive Technology on display that visitors could see and even try out. The volunteers who worked the booth were eager to demonstrate the various pieces of equipment and were always ready to answer questions.



Downtown Frankfort, KY September 15, 16, 17

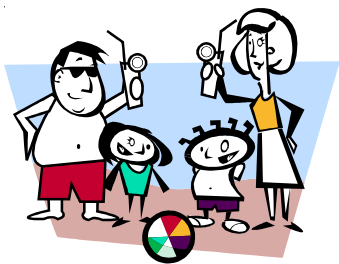
Music...Dance...Boatrides...Food...Artist Demonstrations and more

For three days, join in the excitement as Kentucky celebrates the traditions of its living folk culture. Artists, communities, and families from every corner of the state unite in historic downtown Frankfort to explore the many lifestyles and expressions that make Kentuckians unique. Everyone has folklife. Come learn something about the people who live around you, and you'll likely learn something about yourself too! The Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing will have a booth celebrating Deaf Culture. Be sure to stop in and see us!!

For more information about the scheduled events and directions, please visit:

http://history.ky.gov/Programs/Folklife/Kentucky_Folklife_Festival_05.htm

or call (502) 564-1792 (V) or (877) 444-7867 (V)



Family Learning Fair

The Support Network sponsored a FAMILY LEARNING FAIR on Saturday, August 20th. It was very successful despite temperatures in the high 90's.

About 140 family members and friends visited the Fair throughout the afternoon. This was the Support Network's first Family Learning Fair and was held under the trees on the front lawn of KSD's Lee Hall, in Danville. The Network hopes to help parents around the state plan and organize similar events in their own home towns.

Activities for the afternoon included a variety of performers (student magicians, signing choirs, and storytellers), vendors, provider booths, small informative workshops, a FUN mini-kids fair, cake walk, door prizes, and bake sale. The day ended with a cookout which was quickly hurried inside as an unexpected downpour arrived.

Everyone went home tired and hot (a few were even a little wet), but with a lot of information about helpful resources around the state as well as new friends.

The Support Network for Families is a statewide parent group that welcomes new members, both families and professionals. The goals of this group are 'to share their experiences and learn from each other.' They are 'accepting and encouraging of each family's choices for communication and educational placement.' If you would like more information on how to join (there are no membership dues), contact any of the following:

Sarah New (Louisville 502-599-5513) wenharas@insightbb.com

Anita Dowd (Elizabethtown) TheSilentMuse@msn.com

Dana Rouse (Danville 859-854-3030) mamarouse@yahoo.com

Heidi Givens (Owensboro 270-925-2560) heidigasl@yahoo.com

Employment Opportunity LICENSED MENTAL HEALTH THERAPIST PROFICIENT IN SIGN LANGUAGE

The Kentucky Department for Mental Health and Mental Retardation Services is seeking a licensed therapist to provide counseling to deaf, late-deafened and hard of hearing clients and their families. Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals are encouraged to apply! The requirements for this position include a Masters, passing the licensure test in the Commonwealth of Kentucky, work experience in providing mental health diagnostic and counseling services, and proficient in American Sign Language and knowledge of Deaf Culture.

An Equal Opportunity Employer

Send resume with cover letter to:
Kentucky Department of Mental Health
and Mental Retardation Services
Attn: Marcie Jeffers/Kim Weldon
Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services
100 Fair Oaks Lane, 4E-D
Frankfort, KY 40621-0001

Email:

Marcie.Jeffers@ky.gov

Kim.Weldon@ky.gov

Different Perspectives



Sounds!

by Mary Lord

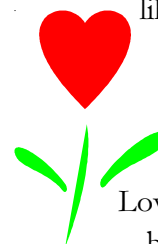
A crackling of paper,
The squeak of a chair,
Rumbling traffic passing by,
Pages loudly falling one upon another.
Voices bouncing off the walls,
Shoes stepping loudly across the carpet,
A rain whistling 'Here I come Here I come!'
Desk drawers sliding across rusty rollers,
Pencils scratching words on long yellow sheets,
Voices of visitors making appointments,
Doors closing, opening, outside noises in for a second or two.
Singing rain scattering black and wet notes all over the ceiling,
Stuffed folders brushing back into line, one against the other,
Erasures softly rubbing words that were so unnecessary,
Blades of scissors cut the silence eliminating the unnecessary.
Though it's hurry hurry, so many things left undone,
Amazement is holding me tight
At the Sorrow that it took so long, laughter now that it is here,
Amid such delight, I cry
My hearing aids are here, are working,
Are in my ears, and once again I CAN HEAR!

I Like to Be Deaf

Author Unknown

I was born deaf
and I like the way I am.
When I am quiet I hear nothing
to cheer me up, no music,
and no company.
I can't hear the birds chirp in the
morning, neither the droplets of
early morning dew.

I can feel, look at the sky,
it's the color of love.
Love brings us together, I can
communicate, even though I can't
hear I use my imagination
like if I were hearing, deafness
makes no difference.



I am deaf, I accept it
and I won't change it.
Love mends your heart, I am deaf
but the rest of me is like you.

OCTOBER

4th Family Sign Night-Owensboro
6th Louisville Deaf Senior Citizens Social-Louisville
7th Fayette Mall Social-Lexington
Andrew Foster Club Social-Louisville
8th KY Golfers Association
Western KY Deaf Club-Draffenville
Black Deaf Advocates-Louisville
Social Deaf Chat-Newport
11th Greenwood Mall Social-Bowling Green
SHHH meeting-Louisville
Family Sign Night-Owensboro

18th Family Sign Night-Owensboro
20th Louisville Deaf Senior Citizens-Louisville
21st Fayette Mall Social-Lexington
Andrew Foster Club Social-Louisville
22nd SHHH Luncheon
25th Family Sign Night-Owensboro
SHHH meeting-Louisville
Greenwood Mall Social-Bowling Green
29th Southeastern Deaf Social-London

For times and locations, please contact KCDHH
at 800-372-2907 or kcdhh@ky.gov.

**Commission on the Deaf
and Hard of Hearing**
632 Versailles Road
Frankfort, KY 40601

An agency of the Kentucky Education Cabinet

**Plan your family vacation.
Attend DeaFestival – Kentucky on July 1, 2006.
Enjoy the fireworks display by the
City of Louisville!**

